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16 April 2004

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Iran: Whether a daughter of a male citizen of Iran and a female citizen of Bahrain can obtain an Iranian passport if she was born in another country, never lived in Iran and does not have any links to her father
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

The Director of the Travel Document Section, Interests Section of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Embassy of Pakistan in Washington, D.C., stated that a woman could apply for an Iranian passport if she can provide documentation of her father's Iranian citizenship, such as a passport or birth certificate (15 Apr. 2004). If the woman can prove her father's Iranian citizenship, she will automatically be considered an Iranian citizen, since citizenship is a paternal designation, and therefore be eligible for an Iranian passport (Embassy of Pakistan 15 Apr. 2004). In the absence of such identity documents, a woman over 18 years of age may apply directly to the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the country where she is currently residing and the Embassy will contact the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Iran to determine whether they can assist her (ibid.). If the applicant is under the age of 18, her father must apply for a passport on her behalf (ibid.). In the case of a woman who has no contact with her father, the mother, regardless of her nationality, could apply on the daughter's behalf (ibid.).

The Research Directorate made several unsuccessful attempts to obtain information from the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Ottawa on whether a daughter of a male citizen of Iran and a female citizen of Bahrain can obtain an Iranian passport if she was born in another country, never lived in Iran and does not have any links to her father.

According to Mohammad Ali Mirkhani, head of the Passport and Visa Department of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who spoke to the delegates of a Danish fact-finding mission in September 2000, "any Iranian citizen above the age of 18 is entitled to an Iranian passport" (Danish Immigration Service 1 Oct. 2000). Mirkhani provided the following additional information regarding the procedures for filing a passport application in Iran as well as overseas:

"The Iranian police force (LEF) is the authority responsible for issuing passports [in Iran]. ... An application form has to be completed when applying for a passport. The details provided on the form must be identical to those which appear on the applicant's Iranian identity card, which must be presented in conjunction with the application. In addition, Iranian men must present a military logbook certifying that they have completed military service. Any Iranian citizen applying for a passport must come in person to the LEF, both to

submit the application form and to collect the passport when it is ready.

A passport can be issued within 48 hours of the application form being submitted. Iranian passports are valid for five years. They can be extended for a further five years. There are no periods of validity other than five years. ... the Iranian authorities are planning to introduce new Iranian passport forms. At present this is scheduled to take place in March 2002.

A married woman must have permission from her husband before a passport can be issued. The woman's husband must appear before a notary public in order to give his written permission. The woman herself does not have to appear before the notary when her husband gives his permission. Once he has given his permission, the husband does not have to appear before the passport police in connection with his wife's passport application.

...

Passports are issued by Iranian representations outside Iran in cooperation with the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The LEF is not involved in such cases. ... a fee of around USD 15 is charged for issuing a passport in Iran. Iranian representations outside Iran charge a passport fee of around USD 55 for issuing an Iranian passport...." (ibid.).

With respect to Iranian citizenship, the April 2003 UK Country Assessment for Iran, citing information from the US Defense Security Service's Citizenship Criteria produced on 16 October 2001 and the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Country Profiles, states that:

[a] child born to an Iranian father regardless of the country of birth is Iranian by descent.

...

Iranian citizenship may be acquired upon fulfillment of the following conditions: Person must be at least 18 years of age, have resided in Iran for five years, not to be a military service escapee and not to have been convicted of a major crime in any country. The wives and minor children (under 18) of naturalised citizens are also considered Iranian citizens. Dual citizenship is not recognised. Iran allows individuals to hold dual nationality, but will treat a dual national as Iranian and ignore the second nationality.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Denmark. Danish Immigration Service. 1 October 2000. *Report on Fact-Finding Mission to Iran: 9-17 September 2000*. <<http://www.udlst.dk>> [Accessed 8 Apr. 2004]

Embassy of Pakistan, Interests Section of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Washington, D.C. 15 April 2004. Interview with the Director of the Travel Document Section.

United Kingdom. Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND), Home Office. April 2003. "Country Assessment: Iran." <<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk>> [Accessed 8 Apr. 2004]

Additional Sources Consulted

Unsuccessful attempts to obtain information from the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Ottawa and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tehran.

Internet sites, including: AMEInfo; Ecoi.net; Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Ottawa; Embassy of Pakistan, Interests Section of the Islamic Republic of Iran; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tehran.

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